

# The Devniad, Book 2

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## Orbita Dicta

**Heard in the panels, halls, stalls, and boudoirs of Boskone 32, Sheraton-Tara Hotel, Framingham, MA, February 17-19, 1995**

How accurate are these citations?

To quote that useful Italian scholar, Ben Trovato: "A great quotation should be characteristic or appropriate. Sometimes even true."

*[A well-meaning ad agency colleague wishing me luck at the con but not quite grasping the spirit of Boskone]*

Well, anyway, nanoo-nanoo.

\* \* \*

*[My brother-in-law and major fantasy buff Bob Kuhn, at dinner the first night of the con, getting into the spirit of his first Boskone since 1980 with an appropriate toast]*

Your elf.

\* \* \*

*[Film Reviewer Dan Kimmel, on the voracity of Programming Co-Heads these days]*

I guess the moral here is never to speak to Deb Geisler. Because if you say "Good morning" to her, you're going to find yourself on a panel titled "The Imagery of Dawn in Modern Science Fiction."

\* \* \*

*[Author Melissa Scott discussing how skimpy makeup effects can adversely impact*

*the believability of supposedly inhuman Star Trek characters]*

An alien defined by his ears is less hard for me to take, somehow, than an alien defined by his hair.

\* \* \*

*[Your humble narrator, touching slivery hair and spectacles to illustrate how he and the rest of fandom are all turning into]*

Gray Lensmen.

\* \* \*

*[Reviewer Joe Mayhew refutes the old advice "Write what you know"]*

I sold my first pornography at 18. Mind you, I was a virgin at the time.

*[Mayhew again]*

A critic is someone who tries to make you feel bad about something you've read....A reviewer is someone who gets readers together with books they might like.

*[Almost Endlessly Quotable Mayhew]*

R.A. Lafferty is our James Joyce.

*[Alright, That's About Enough Of Mayhew]*

"Oeuvre" is when you stick your fingers down your throat.

*[Incredible Reading Machine Don D'Ammassa of Science Fiction Chronicle]*

The vast majority of books I review with a paragraph, I could have reviewed with one word: "OK."

*[D'Ammassa disclosing the secret of how to read and review, say, 33 titles plus 4 graphic novels plus 8 anthologies every single eye-straining brain-draining month]*

The trick is always to have a book  
with you.

\* \* \*

*[Wide-eyed new author who's just been told  
by Jane Yolen how some fundamentalists  
view people who write fantasy]*

Hello. I'm a tool of Satan.

\* \* \*

*[Superb short form talent Martha Soukup,  
unerringly winning hearts at her reading]*

You're all people who read, aren't  
you? I like people who do that.

*[Soukup about to read "The Story So Far"]*

I was told it was the best story I've  
ever written by Gregory Feeley, who is  
God.

*[Soukup on whether repeatedly failing to sell  
in certain markets was discouraging]*

Every writer I know is discouraged  
most of the time.

*[Soukup quoting Playboy fiction editor  
Alice Turner in a rejection letter for a story  
with a feminist element]*

"I don't think our boys are ready for  
this yet."

\* \* \*

*[Noted wisecrack artist Bob Kuhn at the  
Trivia Contest, responding to the question of  
what the initials stood for in F.M. Busby's  
name by drawling an Australian phrase for  
"I don't know"]*

Fuck Me....

\* \* \*

*[Noted NESFAn Suford Lewis to a new  
acquaintance, on why Suford]*

Too many Sues.

*[Lewis, on being told her beautiful Regency  
gown looked "very Bath"]*

Thanks. London.

\* \* \*

*[A dealer named Craig on David Zindell's  
Broken Gods]*

This is the best science fiction novel I  
have ever read.

\* \* \*

*[Sound my sleeping brother Michael, who  
had a cold, made in the next bed both nights  
of the convention, over and over, hour after  
every red-eyed, endlessly tormenting hour,  
to the tune of "Duh **duh** duh duh"]*

Unnnkkkkk**huggghnnn**nughhhhhuggg.

*[Sound I made Sunday morning upon  
discovering with every outraged nerve in my  
palate that the small white tube resting label-  
side-down beside **my** sink in the spot where I  
stored **my** toothpaste did not in fact contain  
my toothpaste, but another whitish  
squeezeable substance belonging to my  
territorially moronic brother -- a substance  
that confirmed my initial profoundly  
unfavorable taste test with a glance once its  
label was revealed: "Desitin Diaper Rash  
Ointment"]*

AarrgghhhhJesusChristPahPahPah!

\* \* \*

*[Tor Editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden on why  
the price of books has gone up]*

Direct marketing has a lot to answer  
for. All those catalogs directly compete  
for the same type of pulp that most  
books use....Not that our crazy  
distribution system doesn't contribute.  
Basically, we pulp three copies to sell  
one....

But it's a tough business. If auto  
manufacturing was like publishing,  
every year Ford would have to premiere  
250 new models. With **no** models left  
over from last year.

*[Nielsen Hayden on electronic publishing]*

Publishers are beside themselves trying to figure this out....Three SF publishers are on-line now. Us, Warner Aspect, and Del Ray. You can get sample chapters [for booksellers only?]....But it's not like most authors are too eager to blaze trails either. Nobody wants their book to be the one that is experimented upon.

*[Nielsen Hayden on putting teeth into your marketing effort]*

Certain books have great interest for specialized audiences, if you can reach them.

For instance, I think I can say that Piers Anthony's *Prostho Plus* is the best SF novel about dentists in space ever published. And I believe it got PR in dental magazines....

When my dentist found out what I do, he was so excited. "You work for Tor Books? Why, they published *Prostho Plus*, the greatest novel I have ever read."

\* \* \*

*[Grand Old Author Hal Clement, dispelling an assumption he feared younger fans might make regarding the title of his Missed Predictions panel, "I Remember Babylon"]*

I don't.

*[NESFAn amateur oracle Tony Lewis on how not to end up under discussion at future "missed predictions" panels]*

It does not pay a prophet to be too specific....

Science fiction is not so much predictive as preventive.

\* \* \*

*[Martha Soukup at her kaffeeklatsch, on the predicament that the plaintiff -- a professional diver -- found himself in after an*

*underwater industrial accident which led to the civil lawsuit for which Martha recently served as jury foreperson]*

The wound on his foot was open to the sea right through his boot and several layers of sockliners. But he had to avoid the bends, which forced him to spend several hours coming up. So he slowly ascended hundreds of feet to the surface. Right through the waters -- laden with what the lawyers kept calling "feculent matter" -- of the effluent plume from the main sewage outfall tunnel of the city of San Diego....

When they were preparing for the job, neither he nor the diving supervisor seemed to realize the danger of working in that stuff. He had once done a job diving into water with dioxins in it. You want something poisonous in an open wound? Shit makes dioxin seem like child's play....

When he got to the hospital a couple hours after the accident, he still wasn't in great pain. More embarrassed than anything else. After all, the damage didn't look like much. It was just some swelling, and this little smile-shaped cut on the top of his foot....

At first, the doctors were pretty sure he was dead. Then they thought he'd at least lose the leg....

*[Note re above: to find out what happened next, and what the jury did, see Martha's postings on GENie. Or corral her sometime yourself. It's a long story, but I promise you it will hold your attention. Our kaffeeklatsch went a tad overtime.]*

*[My sister Darcy Devney, who heard or overheard four different people talking about that diving accident in the space of a few hours]*

If I have to hear the story of Martha Soukup's kaffeeklatsch one more time, I'll scream.

\* \* \*

*[Guest of Honor Diane Wynne Jones on the pernicious effects of enshrined literary Rules]*

In horror, the Rule is, Be As Terrifying As Possible. Reasonable enough....

But then there's the new Ecology Rule. It basically would say that Hansel and Gretel's father -- a poor woodcutter -- is busily destroying the rainforest....And there's a Rule developing that gloom is scientific.

*[Jones eschewing Rules, upholding her Principles]*

You can be funny and serious at the same time....

You can say anything in words....

A private principle: hatred of long descriptions that don't add to the narrative....

I hate dialect. You can get around it by using the rhythms of the speech, and ignoring all the silly spellings....

You have to be **responsible**. Someone is going to read that book at an impressionable time in their lives. And it's going to stay with them for a long time.

*[Jones debunking the hunker mentality]*

Genre is a notion that developed in the '20s....It's been disastrous. Each genre is hunkered down beside what it believes to be its own boundaries.

*[Jones pointing out the fallacy of "dumbing down" YA lit]*

Less than 5 years ago, it was a truth universally acknowledged that anyone who could follow the plot of Dr. Who could follow anything.

\* \* \*

*[One-Man-Controversialist Tom Easton in a discussion of debated theories]*

World food production rates are heading toward 800 calories per capita per day.

*[Easton raining on several parades]*

The important question about global warming is, exactly **where** is it going to rain? One theory says that all that precipitation is going to come down in Greenland....

Defoliation of the rainforest? That's a trivial problem. So it dries up downwind of the Amazon. There's not much there in the first place.

\* \* \*

*[NESFA President and Attentive Reader Mark Olson in panel on Neglected Author Murray Leinster, reacting to a revelation from Hal Clement]*

He said it "Len-ster," not "Leenster"? I've been pronouncing it wrong for 30 years!

*[Olson on the Leinstermeister's groundbreaking contributions to the field]*

His short story "Sideways in Time," from 1934, originated the idea of parallel worlds.

*[Panelist Joe Rico adding more firsts]*

Leinster did the first story of the Net. In 1946. In a story called "A Logic Named Joe." And unusually for the pulp writers, he even thought about the social implications of his computer network....

And his story "First Contact." It gave a name to its genre....

He made money as quite a successful inventor, too. Invented a new film technique -- back projection. It was used in the movie *2001*....

Yes, it's true. This panel is a shameless plug for an upcoming Leinster collection we hope to do.

\* \* \*

*[Editor Nancy C. Hanger in the panel on freelance editing]*

Freelance editors are a corporation's dream employees. No pension, no benefits, no sick days, no overtime....

And of course there's even more burnout, if that's possible. We had a freelance copyeditor recently -- disappeared. Completely. The person is gone. The manuscript is gone. The apartment is empty.

*[And in a possibly related opinion]*

Hospice counseling is not significantly different from editing.

*[Editor Madeleine Robins suggests editing is not for just the dead, but the quick]*

The amount of FedEx money we spend to get out **one** comic book is **amazing**.

*[Copyediting Queen Teresa Nielsen Hayden notes there are some light moments on the job, though not without risk]*

You get so sick of working on a project that you give it a funny house name. Some version of the title, but as twisted as possible.

However, be absolutely certain the working name doesn't end up getting into the production stream. If that fantasy book comes out with the title **printed** as *Snow White Nose Red*, God help you.

*[Nielsen Hayden on the Death Spiral of the Commakazes]*

It's almost unheard-of now to have in-house copyeditors. So all the tricks and fine points of the craft that they shared with one another when they worked side-by-side -- that's all gone.

*[Nielsen Hayden on how to interview people who -- despite all the above -- want to be copyeditors, but have no publishing experience]*

Start by asking them to spell "accommodating." If they can, maybe there's some hope.

\* \* \*

*[Fan Jeff Rogers, whose cool demeanor cannot mask his essentially tragic fate as another victim of chronic collector's completism]*

This weekend I managed to fill in the last gaps. I've now got every single last one of the '70s Ballantine "Best of" single-author collections.

\* \* \*

*[Satanic Salesmanshipmaster Darrell Schweitzer discusses rumors that L. Ron Hubbard's late and posthumously issued SF books were actually written by captive Scientology flacks]*

You can be positive that Hubbard himself wrote them, for two reasons. First, because of how bad they were. Second, because after awhile they stopped.

*[Panelist Ben Yalow on Hubbard's legendary speed of composition]*

It's all true. John Campbell himself told me the best story on this.

He called Hubbard one afternoon and said that he, Campbell, had a big problem. The magazine was due to go to press Friday. It was now Tuesday. But the lead novelette promised by another writer wasn't here. And in fact didn't exist.

Campbell had the cover art done. The title set. And the exact number of words the story had to be to fill the hole. He discussed these with Hubbard.

Could Hubbard possibly pull off a miracle and get him out of this?

Hubbard said sure, OK.

That was at 2:00 p.m. At 5:00 Hubbard called back and told Campbell not to leave the office.

At 7:00 p.m. was delivered a not great but decent, readable, 24,000 word novelette to the specifications needed....

Someone once clocked Hubbard's speed on the typewriter -- not typing, composing -- at 150 words per minute.

*[Schweitzer on anthologies and - gists]*

In 1946, literate science fiction was less than 10 years old. Anthologists had a virgin field....

The "Year's Best" format was invented by Bleiler and Dikty in 1949....

Yes, both Martin Greenberg and Martin Harry Greenberg are important in the field. For different reasons.

They're distinguished professionally as Good Greenberg and Bad Greenberg....

Hartwell's anthologies are trying to write the history of the field from the vantage point of our day. He's replacing Healy & McComas, who did the same for theirs.

*[Audience member in anthologists panel on the hooraw about soft definitions in Hartwell and Cramer's anthology Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard Science Fiction]*

Hartwell says he didn't do that subtitle. The publishers put that in because of the success of an earlier volume that said "hard SF."

*[Schweitzer on tastes acquired in early life]*

Let's face it, if you give Doc Smith to an adult reader with no background in science fiction, you'll have a lot of explaining to do.

*[Schweitzer on The Estate That's Selling The Man Who Sold The Moon]*

To get one Heinlein story for your anthology, you'll pay about 500 bucks. Whereas most authors will settle for more like 50....

It doesn't behoove you to haggle much with the anthologist. Remember that every time you're anthologized, you get at least one new reader.

\* \* \*

*[Attorney Deb Geisler, who was probably pressured into joining the Internet Superhighway/legal issues panel by Programming Co-Head Deb Geisler]*

As a First Amendment scholar, I can tell you that there's no such thing as a public right to know.

*[Panelist David Kogelman offers some valuable information]*

The Constitution was designed to prevent the majority from giving away the rights of the minority....

People who say "Information wants to be free" are usually not people who create valuable information.

*[Plus some information we suspected already]*

Smut still provides one of the highest percentages of downloads over the Usenet.

*[Fan Greg McMullin in an aside to an audience member, delivered in a slightly paranoid whisper]*

Have you heard of the Communications Decency Act?

*[We hate it already, just from the name; what about it?]*

It's **dangerous**.

*[Panelist Michael Benveniste pins his faith that Big Brother will fail on an essential characteristic of human nature]*

That's where what I call The New Privacy will come from. People are too lazy to look at all this surveillance information in real time.

\* \* \*

*[Fantasy fan and world-class peripatetic David Bayly on the imaginative powers of author Tim Powers]*

I lived for a while in the hills -- you know, Switzerland. So I really loved the Powers novel *The Stress of Her Regard*. Great book, and it has that area for some settings. When I met Tim Powers later, I congratulated him on describing it so well. He said he'd never been there. It was all research.

I would have sworn he'd crawled over every inch of those mountains.

\* \* \*

*[A Major New Voice In Fantasy finds her opening statement on the Hard Fantasy panel to be -- well, hard going]*

As far as I -- There is a certain -- One could argue that -- Oh! I'm Delia Sherman.

*[Delia Sherman finds her voice]*

I happen to think that the difference between SF and fantasy is that SF is predicated on the assumption that everything can make sense.

*[I forget which panelist made this comment on the Swanwick article in the November 1994 Asimov's that sparked the panel]*

What Michael Swanwick means by hard fantasy is fantasy that is hard to read.

*[Editor David Hartwell agrees -- but in a good way]*

Hard fantasy is fantasy that has literary ambitions.

*[HardFan Panelist Ellen Kushner on why she doesn't care if Swanwick's article wasn't analytically rigorous, she'd defend it at swordpoint]*

I'm a bit of a style slut...

Michael Swanwick is definitely in the Kim Stanley Robinson School of Coolness and Smartness.

*[HardFan Panelist Constance Hirsch, quoting a somewhat misguided cover blurb]*

"In the tradition of Robert E. Howard and J.R.R. Tolkien."

*[Michael Swanwick (as quoted by Baltimore Bookseller Mike Walsh), on first seeing the beautiful British hardcover of his The Iron Dragon's Daughter, bestowed on the cover artist a writer's sincerest tribute]*

If I'd seen this before publication, I'd have written the scene into the book.

*{Which incidentally may demonstrate my assertion to the Hard Fantasy panel that}*

Comedy is easy, fantasy is hard.

## Backchat

**on last month's APA: NESFA (#296, 1/95)**

### To Thomas Endrey

I had barely heard of Magic cards when I scanned the APA before Boskone. Yours was the first bit of Magicana I'd ever read. Wish it had followed Tony Lewis's in the collation, to give me more context.

What a strange and wonderful thing a Revised Common Shatter must be!

**To Tony Lewis**

Thanks for supplying some desperately needed Magical context with the *Wall Street Journal* article.

Great phrase you use about the cards and their addictiveness -- "flat crack." When someone mentioned it to me at Boskone -- I thought for the first time -- the term seemed totally hilarious. So funny that I tried it out on you at the Gripe Session when the Magic game was mentioned. Strange, it didn't really crack you up....

Enjoyed your morbid list of Haiti's rulers and their fates. The names Dessalines and Christophe brought back a fine Kenneth Roberts novel I read years ago, involving Toussaint L'Ouverture and the fight for Haitian independence. *Lydia Bailey*. As Mark Olson would say, highly recommended.

**To Mark Olson**

I'd seen your reviews in *Proper Boskonian*, so I was aware of the format and genial incisiveness. But the sheer number was frightening. Do you do this monthly? You must not have cable TV.

About the book by David Brin. If you "don't even dislike him particularly," remind me never to share ground zero with someone you hate.

All the more fun to read, of course.

On another note, the review of Mertz's *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs* was excellent -- just about perfect. Friendly. Balanced. Brief. Bravo!

Oh my God. Help! I'm possessed by the living ghost of Frasier Crane!

**To Lisa Hertel**

I've been to many Boskones, but dipped my toe into Arisia first with a one-day membership on Saturday. So it

was interesting to read your dishy perspective as a double insider.

I saw many familiar faces -- yours and Mark's, for starters. The crowds were younger, maybe a little more rambunctious. Some panels were a little softer in terms of quality. I did enjoy seeing more comix people. There's an Au Bon Pan right in the building, which made me nostalgic for NOREASCON 3. And seeing the pilot for *Lost in Space* reminded me why we were in Vietnam.

But I wasn't actually mugged by Malcolm McDowell clones, impaled by a wooden unicorn, or offered any designer drugs. So I'm sure I'll be back.

**To all**

I've been a NESFA member for a little over a year, last month's was only the second APA I've seen, and this is my first fanzine writing. If you don't count the pre-Boskone piece I tried last month, which missed the deadline due to the Postal Service's Phony Express. (From Wednesday to Monday for Canton to Andover!)

Anyway, if you read this -- and given what Mark Hertel says about reader response, you won't -- be gentle.